



DC
COMICS™

23

THE NEW 52!

SUPERMAN™

ACTION COMICS™

SCOTT
LOBDELL
TYLER
KIRKHAM

OCT 2013

RATED T TEEN

DCCOMICS.COM

COSMIC DEATHMATCH!

TYLERKIRKHAM





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COSMIC DEATHMATCH!

PLUS!
**THE WORLD OF
HRYPTON!**



THE EARTH'S
MOON.

THE BIG GUY WITH
THE PONYTAIL? STRAIGHT,
FIRST KNIGHT OF THE
PAX GALACTICA.

PRESUMABLY SOME
COSMIC ORDER OF
JUSTICE OR SOME
SUCH.

THAT WAS
QUITE A FIGHT YOU
PUT UP THERE,
"SUPERMAN".
BUT NOW
THAT MY COMRADES
HAVE ARRIVED--
--YOU WOULD DO
WELL TO **SURRENDER**
BEFORE THEY KILL
YOU IN THE HEAT
OF BATTLE.

WHAP

THE ONE IN THE
LONG RED CAPE
AND KRYPTONIAN
CEREMONIAL BATTLE
ARMOR?

SUPERMAN,
EARTH'S GREATEST
CHAMPION.

(WHEN HE'S NOT LIVING
HIS LIFE AS CLARK KENT,
INTERNET JOURNALIST.)

THEY JUST
MET.

IT DIDN'T
GO WELL.

ATOMIC KNIGHTS

PART TWO

WRITTEN BY SCOTT LOBDELL ART BY TYLER KIRKHAM
COLOR BY ARIF PRIANTO LETTERING BY CARLOS M. MANGUAL
COVER BY TYLER KIRKHAM & ARIF PRIANTO
ASSISTANT EDITOR ANTHONY MARQUES EDITOR EDDIE BERGANZA
SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY

IT'S ABOUT TO
GET WORSE.

YOUR
MAJESTY--
WHY ARE YOU
GIVING ME THAT
LOOK?

CERTAINLY
YOU'RE NOT GOING
TO **BLAME** ME FOR
THE ACTIONS OF
THIS INSOLENT
PUP.

I
DISPATCHED
YOU, STRAITH, SO
YOU MIGHT PREPARE
THIS BEACHHEAD FOR
OUR FINAL BATTLE
AGAINST THE
LEXUS.

INSTEAD I
FIND YOU PLAYING
POKE AND TICKLE
WITH A NATIVE.

IN THIS MAN'S
DEFENSE, NO ONE
WAS POKING
OR TICK--

**HOLD
YOUR
TONGUE!**

NONE
DARE ADDRESS
HER EXALTED
LOURDES
WITHOUT HER
PERMISSION!

KIND
AND BRAVE,
SEAMUS.

BUT TIME IS OF
THE ESSENCE. PERHAPS THIS
PITIFUL CREATURE CAN PROVE
HELPFUL BY ENLIGHTENING US TO
THE SPECIFICS OF YONDER
SPHERE OF MUD AND
WATER.

IT IS MORE
LIKELY IT WOULD
PROVE A MOMENTARY
DISTRACTION IF WE
TOSSED IT INTO THE
GAPING MAW OF
OUR ENEMY.

YOU
ARE ALWAYS
THINKING,
ORDLING.

NOW THAT
EVERYONE HAS
OFFERED THEIR
OPINION--
--HERE'S MY
CONTRIBUTION.
YOU HAVE
FOUR MINUTES
TO GET OUT OF
MY SOLAR SYSTEM
NEVER TO BE SEEN
OR HEARD FROM
AGAIN.

BY THE
DARQUE--HOW
STRONG IS THIS
THING?!

PERHAPS
HE MIGHT PROVE
USEFUL TO OUR
CAUSE.

I DON'T
TRUST IT--
IT'S UGLY.

STILL
HERE?

HE
MUST NOT
REACH THE
QUEEN!

FEAR
NOT--NONE
SHALL
PASS!

SKRUNCH!

YOU DARE
ASSAULT OUR
ROYAL--
GAK!

YOU
STARTED THIS,
STRAITH--

HUK
GUK

THANKS.

--I'M
ENDING
IT.

MACE,
PLEASE.





WHO ARE YOU CALLING... COMMON?

IT'S H-HERE.

ULP.

A LOT SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED.

LEXUS, I TAKE IT?

THAT IS ONE NAME, YES.

HE IS ALSO CALLED THE DEVOURER OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.

UH, YEAH...

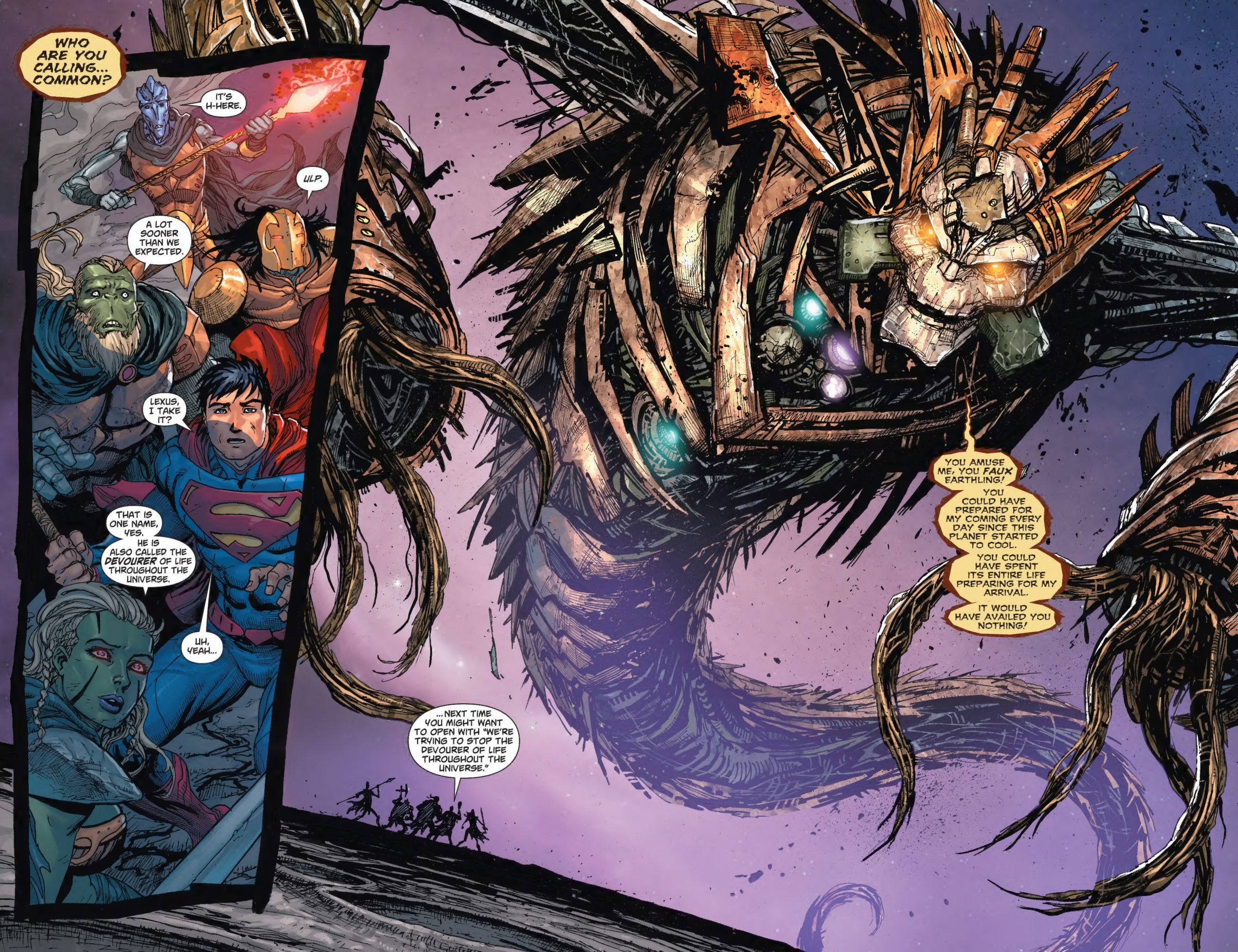
...NEXT TIME YOU MIGHT WANT TO OPEN WITH "WE'RE TRYING TO STOP THE DEVOURER OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE."

YOU AMUSE ME, YOU FAUX EARTHLING!

YOU COULD HAVE PREPARED FOR MY COMING EVERY DAY SINCE THIS PLANET STARTED TO COOL.

YOU COULD HAVE SPENT ITS ENTIRE LIFE PREPARING FOR MY ARRIVAL.

IT WOULD HAVE AVAILED YOU NOTHING!





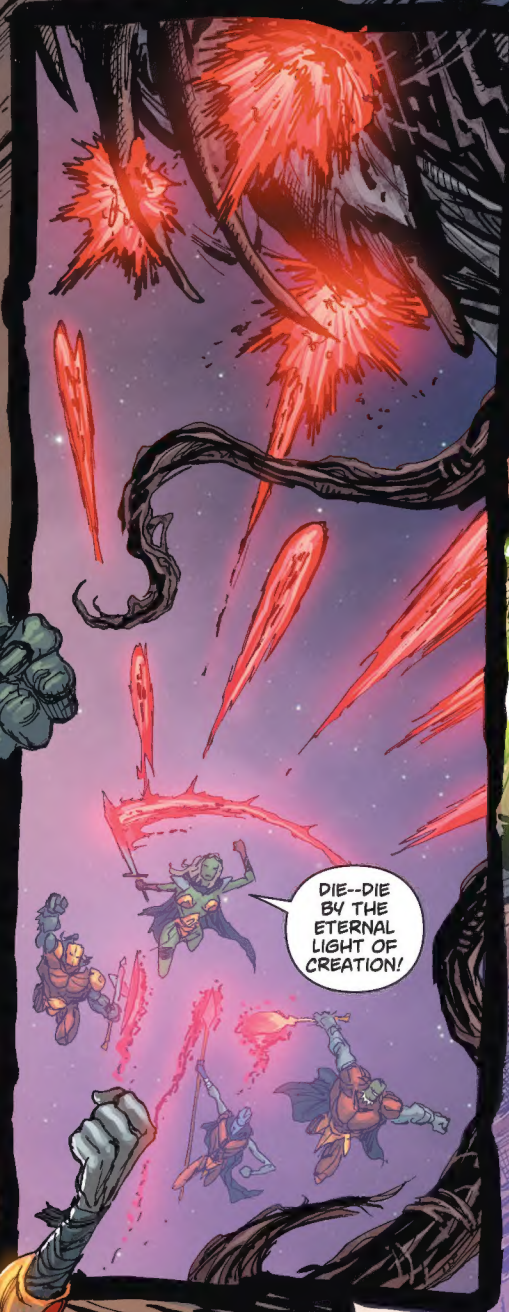
AWAY TO SAFETY,
FRAIL ONE!

SHOVE

AFTER
YEARS OF
BATTLE...
AFTER
COUNTLESS
WARRIORS HAVE
FALLEN...
THIS
MONSTER'S REIGN
OF TERROR ENDS
HERE-NOW!
THE
PAX GALACTICA WILL
SLAY THIS MONSTER
AT LONG LAST!

SO
SWEAR WE
ALL!

NOT
REAL BIG ON
STRATEGY,
EH?



DIE--DIE
BY THE
ETERNAL
LIGHT OF
CREATION!



SO MUCH
POWER--
--WIELDED
BY SUCH
CHILDREN!



DON'T
KNOW WHAT
THE ENERGY
IS...
...BUT ITS
MAKING MY OTHERWISE
INVULNERABLE SKIN
TINGLE ALL THE WAY
OVER HERE!

I'VE
FOUGHT THESE
PEOPLE--

--I'VE
TAKEN THEIR
MEASURE.

NO
WAY THEY
SURVIVE A
DIRECT
HIT.

THE
SUPERMAN!

WHAT
MANNER OF
ADVERSARY
IS THIS--

--THAT
HE IS WILLING
TO SACRIFICE
HIMSELF FOR
US?

A
FOOLISH
ONE...

...FOR NO
FORCE IN THE
UNIVERSE CAN
WITHSTAND--

BLAH.

BLAH.

BLAAAARRGH!

**(O)NE OF THE PROBLEMS
WITH BEING SUPERMAN...**

(THERE ARE A FEW.)

**...IS AFTER FIVE YEARS OF
BEING BLASTED BY FLEETS
OF WAR JETS, ASSAULTED BY
MEGA-TECHS, EVEN FENDING
OFF A PAN-DIMENSIONAL ARMY
MORE THAN ONCE...**

**...YOU RUN THE RISK OF
THINKING YOU'RE DAMNED
NIGH INDESTRUCTIBLE.**

YOU'RE NOT.

NO ONE IS.



NOTHING IS.



YOU... LIVE?

CLEARLY.

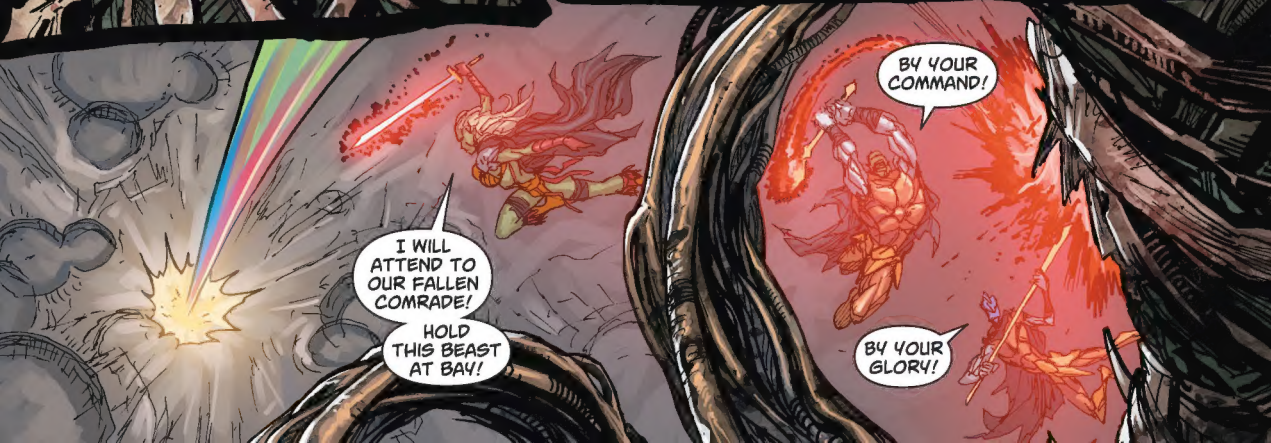
OH.

MAGIC.

THERE WE GO.

THE SUPERMAN?!

HE'S FALLEN!



I WILL ATTEND TO OUR FALLEN COMRADE!

HOLD THIS BEAST AT BAY!

BY YOUR COMMAND!

BY YOUR GLORY!

SU MAN?

DO U LIVE?!

I ASK
YOU A FINAL
TIME:

DO YOU
LIVE?

IF NOT...I
HAVE A BATTLE ON
BEHALF OF *ALL* LIFE IN
THE UNIVERSE I NEED
TO FINISH.

LOURDES--

--THE
OTHERS?

MY KNIGHTS
ARE DISTRACTING
THE DEVOURER FOR
THE NONCE.

LEST HE
ATTACK YOU
AGAIN BEFORE YOU
HAVE TIME TO
RECOVER.


PPFFFT.

I'M
FINE.

THAT
THING--
WHAT IS
IT?

HOW
DID IT
COME TO
BE?

PUT
SIMPLY: IT
IS EVIL.



THOUGH HIS
BODY WAS BORN
TWENTY-THREE
YEARS AGO ON
THE DAY OF MY
BIRTH--

--THE EVIL
THAT CONSUMED
MY BROTHER HAD
INFECTED HIS HEART
LONG BEFORE
HE BEGAN TO
PRACTICE THE
DARK ARTS.

MAYBE...
MAYBE THAT IS
WHY OUR FATHER
INSISTED I FOLLOWED
THE WAYS OF THE
WARRIOR.

SO THAT
SOME DAY I
MIGHT LEAD THE PAX
GALACTICA AGAINST THE
MONSTER MY BROTHER
WOULD ONE DAY
BECOME.

"HE LEFT THE EMBRACE
OF THE KINGDOM OF
WONDER EARLY--

"--SEEKING OUT
ANYONE WHO COULD
TEACH HIM HOW TO
WIELD THE HORROR
WITHIN HIM.

"SOON THERE WAS NO
STOPPING HIM AS HE
CUT A SWATH ACROSS
A DOZEN WORLDS.

"EVENTUALLY, OUR
FATHER CUT THE
DISEASED HEART FROM
MY BROTHER--

"--THAT A
UNIVERSE MIGHT
KNOW FREEDOM.

"HE CAST THAT STILL
BEATING HEART DEEP
INTO SPACE.

"A MISTAKE.

"FOR EVIL--

"--LIKE
ENERGY--

"--CAN
NEVER TRULY BE
DESTROYED.

"SOON, THE
REMAINS OF
MY BROTHER...

"...CLOAKED HIMSELF IN
THE REMAINS OF THE
VERY SAME PLANETS
HE'D DESTROYED OVER
THE YEARS.

WHEN I BEGAN
THIS CRUSADE
TO BRING HIM
TO HEEL--

--WE WERE
FIVE HUNDRED
STRONG.
NOW
WE ARE BUT
FOUR.

I HAVE
FAILED MY
FATHER. MY
PEOPLE.
THE
GALAXY.

NO, YOU
DIDN'T.

YOU
BROUGHT
HIM HERE.

I'LL
DO THE
REST.

BUT YOU
ARE JUST
A MAN.

ALBEIT
A **SUPER**
MAN.

YOU
HAVE
ALREADY
FALLEN
ONCE...

UNTIL
THAT BLAST,
I HAD MISTAKEN
THE THREAT AS
TECHNOLOGICAL
IN NATURE.

ADMITTEDLY
A VERY LIMITED
PERCEPTION BASED ON
THE FACT THAT WE'RE
ALL HERE IN SPACE.

THAT,
AND, WELL--
MAGIC ISN'T
REALLY MY
FORTE.

I NEED TO
BORROW THIS
A MOMENT.

NAV! A
THOUSAND
NAVS!

RETURN MY
ENCHANTED BLADE
THIS INSTANT.

YOU DON'T
GET TO BE A
SUPER MAN--

--WITHOUT STANDING
FOR SOMETHING
GREATER THAN
YOURSELF.

IT HAS
RETURNED?

LEAVE...
OR FACE THE
END OF YOUR
EXISTENCE!

THE
CHOICE IS
YOURS.

YOU DARE
TO SPEAK
TO ME LIKE
THAT?

I WILL
PAINT THIS MOON
WITH YOUR BLOOD--
SO YOU MIGHT WATCH
AS THE WORLD YOU
SEEK TO PROTECT IS
CRUSHED WITHIN
MY MASSIVE
MAW!

HONESTLY?

I WAS
HOPING YOU
WOULD SAY
SOMETHING
TO THAT
EFFECT.



MURDER FOR
EXAMPLE.

OR SOMETHING
AS BANAL AS
RETRIBUTION.

OR
VENGEANCE.

THESE ARE NOTIONS
THE REST OF US MIGHT
ENTERTAIN IN OUR
WEAKER MOMENTS.

BUT SUPERMAN
ISN'T ACTING ON
EMOTION.

HE USES HIS X-RAY
VISION TO PEER INTO
THE VERY CORE OF
HIS ENEMY--

--MAKING CERTAIN THERE
IS INDEED NOTHING LEFT
OF THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE A
PERSON, NO MATTER HOW
CORRUPT THAT PERSON
MIGHT HAVE BECOME.

ALL HE SEES IS THE
DEAD HEART OF A
MAN SLAIN BY HIS
OWN FATHER.

AS HE INDICATED TO LOURDES, MAGIC IS SOMETHING THAT OFTEN COUNTERS SUPERMAN'S NATURAL ABILITIES.

SPELLS OFTEN TRUMP THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RED AND YELLOW SUNS THAT ARE THE SOURCE OF HIS POWERS.

SO IN THIS INSTANCE--

--THE KEY IS USING MAGIC AND SCIENCE IN TANDEM!

SLUTCH

ON EARTH WE HAVE A SAVING.

"THE EVIL THAT MEN DO LIVES AFTER THEM--THE GOOD IS OFT INTERRED WITH THEIR BONES."

YOUR POSTHUMOUS REIGN OF TERROR ENDS HERE AND NOW!

URNPH!

FWOSH!

WITHOUT A VESSEL--

--FOR YOUR HATRED, YOUR RAGE--

--YOU CAN NO LONGER AFFECT THE UNIVERSE AROUND YOU!



WITHOUT A
SOUND--

--IT'S OVER.

AT LONG
LAST...OUR
ENEMY HAS BEEN
SMITTEN?

IT
CERTAINLY
SEEMS THAT
WAY.
I CAN'T
SAY HE'LL BE
MISSED.

THE PAX
GALACTICA WILL
NEVER FORGET
WHAT YOU HAVE
DONE THIS DAY,
SUPERMAN.

JUST
DOING MY
PART.

NO NEED
TO MAKE A
BIG THING OUT
OF IT.

YOUR
HUMILITY ONLY
DOES YOU CREDIT,
MY LIEGE.

MY
FALSE--?

WAIT,
YOUR LIEGE?

YOU
HAVE SLAIN OUR
ENEMY--YOU HAVE
ENDED OUR
CRUSADE.



WE PLEDGE TO YOU
ETERNAL VIGILANCE
AND SERVITUDE,
SUPERMAN.

FROM THIS
DAY FORWARD, YOU
ARE THE UNDISPUTED
RULER OF THE PAX
GALACTICA!

YEAH, UM--
NOT INTO THE
UNDISPUTED RULER
BUSINESS.

BUT
THANK
YOU.

WE ARE
DUTY BOUND TO
OBEY YOUR EVERY
COMMAND.

OKAY.

GO
HOME. FIND
ANOTHER
QUEST.

BY YOUR
COMMAND.

HOW
CAN YOU NOT
LOVE THIS
GUY?

SO
ASK WE
ALL.

**NEXT MONTH: VILLAINS TAKE OVER WITH ACTION COMICS 23.1
CYBORG SUPERMAN!**

**IN 2 MONTHS: THE EPIC CONCLUSION TO THE PSY WAR IN
ACTION COMICS AND SUPERMAN!**

DEEP BENEATH THE CAPITAL CITY OF KRYPTONOPOLIS.

WITH LARA'S FAILED ATTEMPT TO PUT DOWN THE MILITARY COUP, ALL THAT STANDS BETWEEN THE COLONEL'S DEFEAT AND THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF KRYPTONIAN SOCIETY IS A SINGLE MAN.

HIS NAME IS JOR-EL. THOUGH GUIDED BY YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT AND LOGIC, HE IS--AT THE LAST--AT A LOSS.

THE WORLD OF KRYPTON

PART 5: FORTITUDE

WRITTEN BY: FRANK HANNAH

ART BY: TOM DERENICK

COLOR: MFI LETTERS: CARLOS M. MANGUAL

ASST. EDITOR: ANTHONY MARQUES

EDITOR: EDDIE BERGANZA

THE GREAT JOR-EL, THE YOUNGEST AND BRIGHTEST MEMBER OF THE SCIENCE COUNCIL, FROZEN AT THE CONTROLS. YOU'RE PATHETIC.

THIS--IS MADNESS.

SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER, BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY



NO.



WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I SAID NO. I WON'T DO IT.



I THINK MAYBE IT'S YOU THAT'S TAKEN LEAVE OF YOUR SENSES.



IT MAKES NO SENSE. IF THERE IS SOMETHING ALL OF US CAN AGREE ON, IT'S THAT KRYPTON IS MORE THAN JUST A PLANET. IT'S AN IDEAL. IT'S BIGGER THAN ALL OF US.

IF I'VE DONE THINGS TO HURT KRYPTON IN THE PAST, I WILL LIVE WITH THAT, BUT I WON'T BE PART OF ITS COMPLETE DESTRUCTION. NOT NOW. NOT EVER.

THE ONLY LOGICAL ANSWER, THEREFORE, IS TO DIE TRYING TO PROTECT THAT IDEAL IN HOPES THAT IT WILL SERVE THOSE YET TO COME.





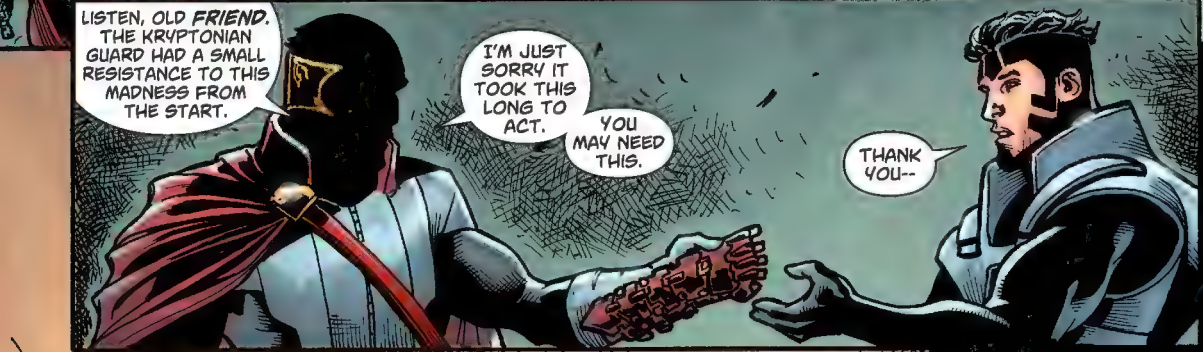
RAO!



THE COLONEL HAS BEEN **NEUTRALIZED**. ALL TEAMS INITIATE SECURITY MEASURES.

JOR-EL. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

PLEASANTLY **SURPRISED** WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE.



LISTEN, OLD FRIEND. THE KRYPTONIAN GUARD HAD A SMALL RESISTANCE TO THIS MADNESS FROM THE START.

I'M JUST SORRY IT TOOK THIS LONG TO ACT.

YOU MAY NEED THIS.

THANK YOU--



THUNK

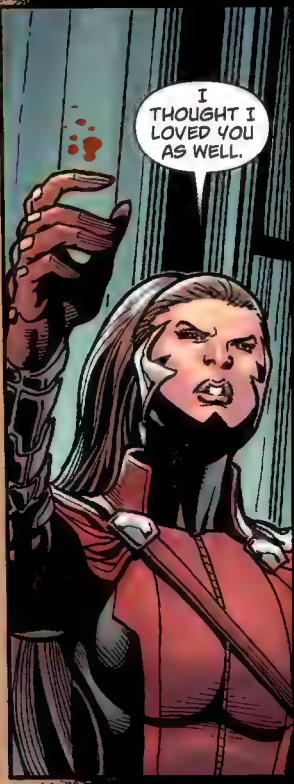


JAX-UR, YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN ME **DIE** AT THE HANDS OF THAT MONSTER.

LARA! NO!

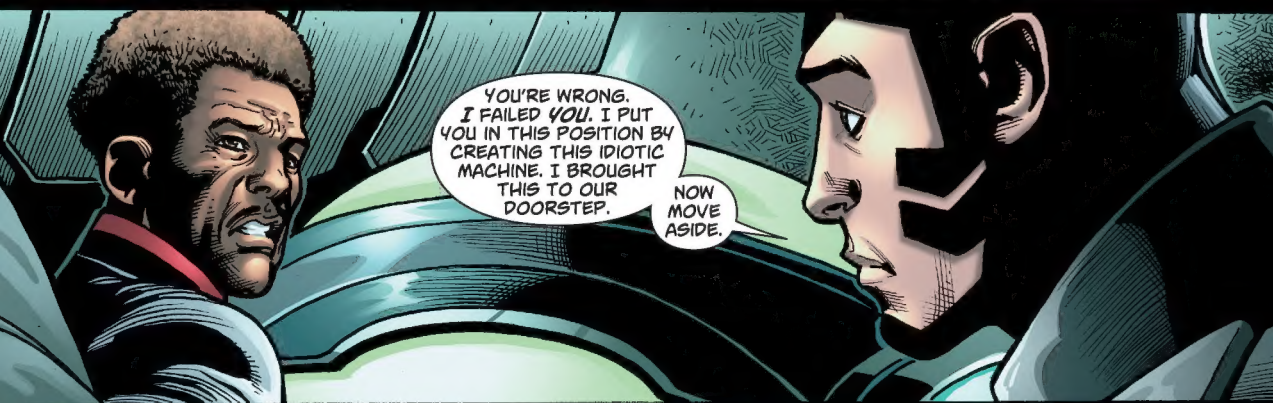
LARA. I TRIED TO SAVE YOU. YOU KNOW I DID.

I--I LOVE YOU.



I THOUGHT I LOVED YOU AS WELL.







I GUESS
THIS WASN'T
THE FIRST TIME
YOU'VE HAD
TO SAVE MY
LIFE.

NOR WILL
IT BE THE
LAST.

LISTEN,
WHAT YOU SAID
EARLIER ABOUT
KRYPTON BEING AN
IDEAL THAT'S BIGGER
THAN ALL OF US?
WELL--I AGREE
WITH THAT.

COLONEL
EKAR WAS A RELIC.
HE FELL VICTIM TO THE
SINS OF KRYPTON'S
PAST. WE ARE ITS
FUTURE.

KRA-HU,
THIS IS AN
OLD FRIEND
OF MINE FROM
CHILDHOOD.

COMMANDER
ZOD. AT YOUR
SERVICE.

THEN
LONG LIVE
KRYPTON!

**MORE ON
THE WORLD
OF KRYPTON
COMING
SOON!**

